

*Betsy Reveal, Chair*

## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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January 25, 2019

Mayor Melvin Carter  
City Council President Amy Brendmoen and Councilmembers  
Third Floor – City Hall  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Saint Paul Planning Commission, it is my privilege to send you and the citizens of Saint Paul our 2018 Annual Report.

The third year of work on an update of the City's Comprehensive Plan continued throughout 2018. After extensive community and interdepartmental input in 2016 and 2017, the Planning Commission's Comprehensive Planning Committee worked with planning staff to create a draft in March 2018, gather further input over the summer, revise and release a public hearing draft in November 2019. Several of 10 core values that run through the plan are People-Centered, Equity, Resiliency, and Growth through Density. An anticipated City Council public hearing is planned in late spring 2019. City-approved comprehensive plan updates are due to the Metropolitan Council by the end of June 2019.

After City adoption of a Master Plan and Zoning for the Ford site in 2017, Ford Motor Company selected Ryan Companies as master developer in June 2018. Since that time, the City has worked with Ryan on its proposed plan and begun review of proposed amendments to the Master Plan and parallel zoning code amendments. An environmental review will kick off in 2019. Meanwhile, the Allianz Field stadium nearly completed construction at the Snelling-Midway site in 2018, and the Planning Commission reviewed and approved sign text amendments and interim parking.

An example of how the Planning Commission and staff work to implement the Comprehensive Plan is the West Marshall Ave Zoning Study, which aimed to build on the asset of frequent transit service along Marshall, Snelling, and University Avenues and support diverse housing options. Key intersections were rezoned to Traditional Neighborhood zoning to support redevelopment, walkability, and a mix of uses. Transit projects themselves were also front and center in 2018, with the Planning Commission approving a Locally Preferred alternative for the Riverview Corridor of a modern streetcar. Supported by City staff and Planning Commissioners, Ramsey County led station area planning and environmental work for the Rush Line (Downtown- Phalen Boulevard-Highway 61 to White Bear Lake), while Metro Transit launched final environmental and project development work for the Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit project from Downtown Saint Paul to Woodbury. All three projects will continue to advance in 2019.

The Planning Commission looks forward to working with Mayor Carter and the City Council in 2019 as it moves to adopt our 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and begins implementation that will guide future growth – Saint Paul for All.

Sincerely,

Betsy Reveal, Chair



# SAINT PAUL PLANNING COMMISSION 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

## About The Saint Paul Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is a 21-member advisory body made up of citizen volunteers appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council. The Planning Commission and its Zoning, Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning, and Transportation Committees take on municipal planning issues as required by law. It reviews and makes recommendations on comprehensive planning and zoning issues, studies and amendments. It also holds public hearings where members of the public can be heard. **This Annual Report provides a summary of the Planning Commission's major activities and accomplishments in 2018.**

### City-Wide Projects

#### 2040 Comprehensive Plan

The Planning Commission made substantial progress on the draft 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan in 2018. A preliminary draft of the six city-wide chapters (Land Use; Transportation; Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Housing; Water Resource Management; and Heritage and Cultural Preservation) was released in March for review by the Metropolitan Council, adjacent cities, and agencies with jurisdiction in Saint Paul. Between March and December, staff engaged with another 200 people through two public open houses; meetings with all seventeen district councils; and focus groups on community health, aging in community and equity. After incorporating relevant comments into a new draft, the Planning Commission released the official public hearing draft of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan in November, and set a public hearing for January 2019.



#### Vision for Saint Paul in 2040\*

*Saint Paul is a community that is welcoming to and a place of opportunity for people of all incomes, ages, races, ethnicities and abilities. It accomplishes this by addressing the place-based dimensions of our neighborhoods: embracing growth; offering a wide range of housing choices for its diverse residents; providing a transportation system that meets the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, riders and drivers; preserving, celebrating and building on our histories; and supporting infill development that sensitively accommodates a growing, aging and increasingly diverse population. Saint Paul is defined and enhanced by its location on the Mississippi River - an economic, environmental, cultural, historic and recreational amenity that enriches our quality of life and economic prosperity.*

\* Proposed, pending Planning Commission and City Council approval of the Draft Comprehensive Plan.



## CHAPTER 64 SIGN TEXT AMENDMENTS

In fulfilling its charge to periodically review and re-evaluate the Zoning Code, in March of 2018 the Planning Commission initiated amendments to the sign ordinance. The Chapter 64 Signs Text Amendments Study addressed advertising signs for soccer facilities – including the new MLS stadium – and Treasure Island Center, as well as temporary signs used to identify engineers, architects, or contractors during construction of a building. The study also addressed several corrections and minor amendments suggested by the Zoning Administrator to clarify code language. The Planning Commission recommended the amendments in June 2018. After striking the amendments related to advertising signs for Treasure Island Center, the City Council adopted the remaining amendments in August 2018.

### Area/Corridor Projects

#### 1 RE-IMAGINE THE RAILWAY - FORD SPUR STUDY

In April 2018 the City finalized Re-Imagine the Railway, a study of new uses for the Ford Rail Spur that stretches from the Ford Site west of Cleveland Avenue to the south and east past West 7th Street, then northeast to St. Clair Avenue. The study examines opportunities to redevelop the railway to serve pedestrians and bicyclists, with the possibility of additional public transit. In July, the Planning Commission voted to forward the study with amendments to the Mayor and City Council as a foundational document for future design and engineering work.



Ford Spur public engagement

#### 2 SNELLING-MIDWAY SITE DEVELOPMENT

In 2018 the Planning Commission continued its role in the Snelling-Midway redevelopment by initiating, reviewing, and recommending Chapter 64 Sign Text Amendments to allow sports facility sponsorship signage for gate entrances and wayfinding kiosks at the new soccer stadium. These amendments were adopted by the City Council in August 2018. Additionally, the Planning Commission recommended the use of an interim use permit to allow temporary parking west of the stadium along Snelling Avenue until that property is redeveloped with uses consistent with the master plan. Planning staff facilitated review and approval by the City Council of the permit.

#### 4 FORD ZONING AND PUBLIC REALM MASTER PLAN

In June 2018, Ford Motor Company chose Ryan Companies as the Master Developer to implement the vision set forth by the City in the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan. Ryan Companies proposed changes to the Master Plan in October which will be considered by the Planning Commission at a public hearing in January 2019. City staff will continue working side-by-side with Ryan Companies in 2019 in pursuit of affordable housing, sustainability, and design goals.

#### 5 AMENDMENT TO UNION PARK DISTRICT PLAN

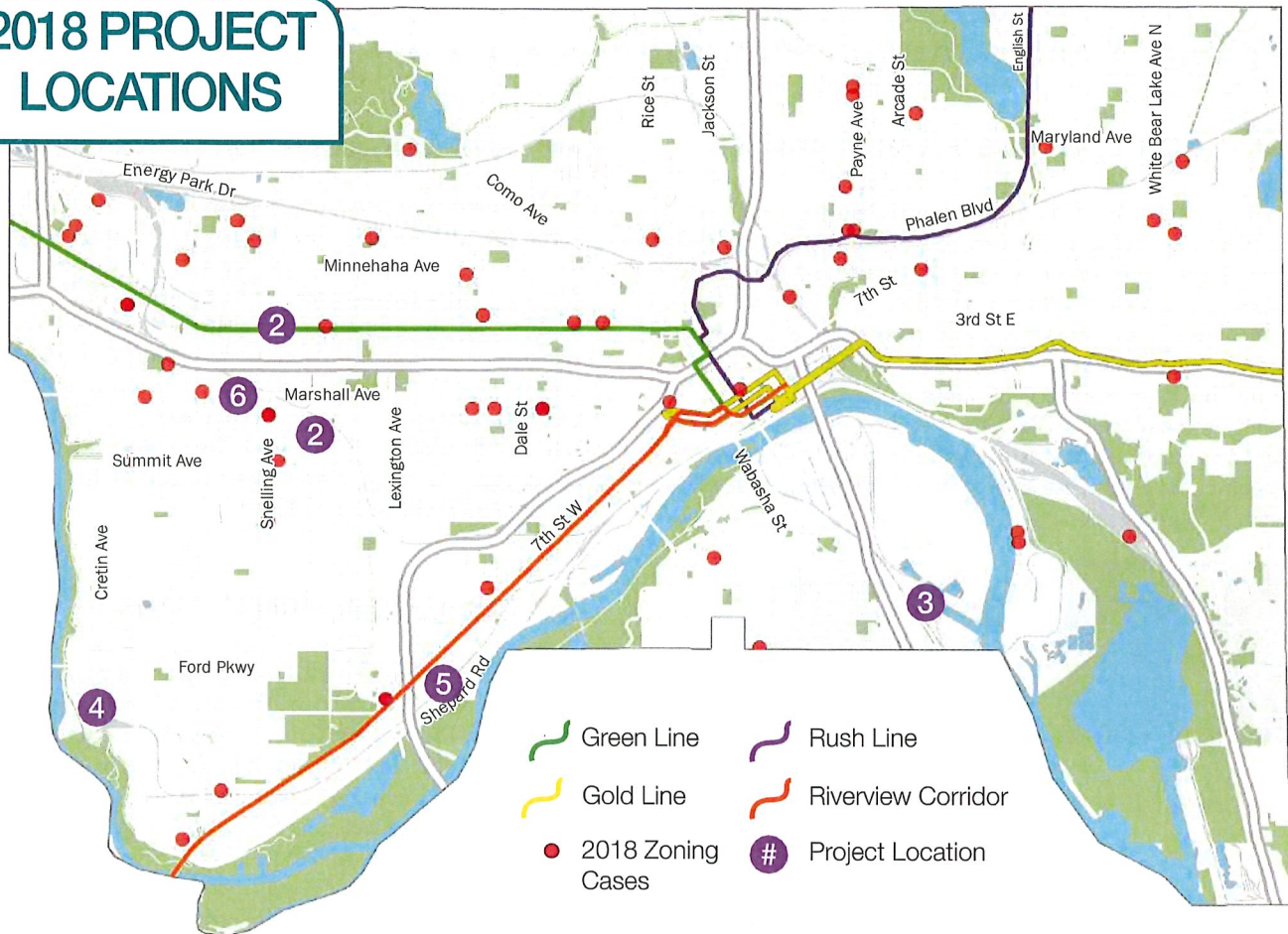
The Union Park Community Plan called for community engagement process to determine land use priorities for the future of Selby Avenue from Ayd Mill Road to Lexington Avenue. This process was carried out by the Union Park District Council and Lexington-Hamline Community Council. In February 2018 the Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval of the resulting land use strategy, which the City Council adopted in April 2018.

#### 3 SOUTHPORT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT STUDY

In December 2015, the City Council asked the Planning Commission to address safety and health issues in the industrial area located on the City's West Side. Environmental, health, and access issues were identified as important by area residents and businesses and included in the study. Several community forums were held during development of the Southport Industrial District Study. At the request of the Planning Commission, the executive summary was translated into Spanish and Somali as part of the study's public review and hearing process prior to approval of the study in February 2018. The study was approved by the City Council in March 2018.



# 2018 PROJECT LOCATIONS



## 6 WEST-MARSHALL AVENUE ZONING STUDY

This zoning study was initiated by the City Council in October 2017 to identify an overall vision for West Marshall Avenue in response to the increasing development interest. The increasing interest has resulted from rising demand for housing, proximity to the professional soccer stadium currently under construction, and availability of transit along Marshall, Snelling, and University Avenues. The study's primary recommendations were to maintain Marshall Avenue as an appropriate place for a range of housing options, to preserve neighborhood character, and to adopt traditional neighborhood zoning along the avenue, including at some commercial intersections and the industrial area east of Snelling. Traditional neighborhood zoning – Saint Paul's "T" districts – guides development toward a more walkable, human-scale urban form with a mix of uses. The Planning Commission's rezoning recommendations were amended and approved by the Mayor and City Council and went into effect on December 5, 2018.



# Regional Transit Corridor Planning

## RUSH LINE BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Ramsey County is leading environmental study and station area planning processes for this planned BRT line. The Rush Line will run approximately fourteen miles within a dedicated guideway following Phalen Boulevard, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way (Vento Trail), and Highway 61. Commuters in Downtown Saint Paul will be able to ride the Rush Line to the city's east side neighborhoods, as well as Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, White Bear Township, and White Bear Lake. Station area planning engagement in Saint Paul has focused on the Payne/Arcade and Phalen Village areas.



Rush Line public engagement

## RIVERVIEW CORRIDOR TRANSIT STUDY

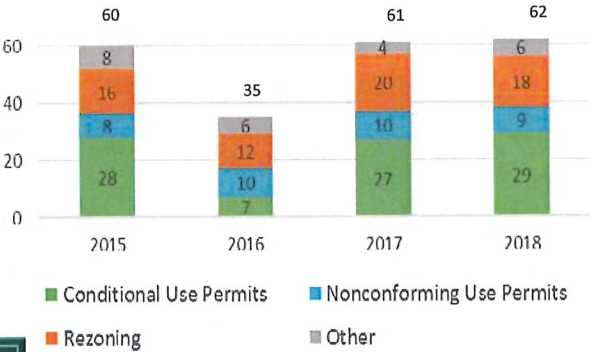
The Planning Commission approved a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Riverview Corridor in 2018, indicating the route and mode for the transit corridor. The LPA is for "modern streetcar" following W. 7th Street from downtown to the Highway 5 Bridge and continuing on to connect to Ft. Snelling, MSP Airport and Mall of America. Modern streetcar allows portions of the railway to be shared with automobiles. Planning Commissioner Bill Lindeke served on the Technical Advisory Committee for the project. Station area planning, with a task force led by a Planning Commissioner will begin in 2019.

## GOLD LINE BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Final environmental work and project development was launched in 2018 by Metro Transit for this planned BRT line between Downtown Saint Paul and Woodbury. Specific station locations and route alignments were selected and refined through intense technical analysis and targeted public engagement. These decisions were guided by the Gold Line Station Area Plans, completed in 2015. Five pairs of stations are planned in downtown, with five additional stations in District 4 (Dayton's Bluff) and District 1 (Eastview-Conway-Battle Creek-Highwood Hills). Metro Transit will release an Environmental Assessment for public comment in 2019.

## Zoning Cases

The Zoning Committee of the Planning Commission reviewed 62 cases in 2018, up 2% from 2017. In addition to the rezoning cases initiated by property owners, the Department of Planning and Economic Development and the Planning Commission proactively rezone properties by developing small area plans and conducting zoning studies.



### 2018 Planning Commissioners

- Aquanetta Anderson
- Cedrick Baker
- Anne Dejoy
- Daniel Edgerton
- Kris Fredson
- Taqee Khaled
- Chong Lee
- William Lindeke
- Kathy Mouacheupao
- Christopher Ochs
- Trevor Oliver
- Adrian Perryman
- Luis Rangel Morales
- John Reich
- Betsy Reveal (Chair)
- Jeffrey Risberg
- Wendy Underwood
- Lue Vang
- Eric Wojchik

### The Planning Commission is staffed by the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED)

- Melvin W. Carter III, Mayor
- Dr. Bruce Corrie, Director, PED
- Luis Pereira, Planning Director
- Sonja Butler, Secretary to the Planning Commission
- For more information:**
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